

West & Central Village Neighborhood Plan

Working Draft

May 17, 2021

Draft Document

This is a draft document prepared by New Jersey Community Capital on behalf of Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newark. This draft document is available for public review and comment in contemplation of its submission in June 2021 to the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs for the West & Central Village neighborhood's proposed participation in the Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program.

There will be a public hearing on this draft document on Wednesday, May 19, 2021 at 4:00 pm Eastern Time conducted via Zoom videoconference. Those interested in participating in the hearing or otherwise submitting comments about this draft document may contact Giancarlo Di Lonardo, Project Manager at New Jersey Community Capital, at gdilonardo@njclf.com.

For ease of reading, the sections of this draft document have been reordered from the ordering outlined by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs in its "Neighborhood Plan Application Guidelines" document.

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Section 1. FORM NP-1: COVER PAGE FOR SUBMISSION OF A NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

Neighborhood:	The West & Central Village	NJ Legislative District:	28 & 29
Eligible Municipality:	Newark	Mayor:	Ras Baraka
Name of Applicant Organization:	Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newark		
Name of CEO/Executive Director:	Jeffrey Farrell		
Address: 58 Park Place, 4th Floor			
City:	Newark	State:	NJ
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NJ Charities Registration Number:	CH-2747000		
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Cellphone (optional):			
What is the time period for this Neighborhood Plan? <u>10 years</u>			
(may not exceed <i>ten (10) years</i>)			
Did you partner with another organization to develop the Neighborhood Plan?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (complete page 2)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> No	

Certification: To the best of my knowledge and belief, the data in this application are true and correct. The governing body of the applicant has duly authorized the document.

Jeffrey Farrell

Chief Executive Officer

Name

Title

Signature of Board Chairperson

Date

Form NP-1, page 2: PARTNERING ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Please provide the following information for each organization with which you partnered in developing the Neighborhood Plan. Copy and attach additional sheets if necessary.

Name of Partnering Organization: New Jersey Community Capital

Contact Person (including title): Giancarlo Di Lonardo, Project Manager

Contact Person's Address: 108 Church Street, 3rd Floor

City: New Brunswick State: NJ Zip Code: 08901

Phone: (732) 640-2061 ext. 219 Cellphone (optional):

E-Mail: gdilonardo@njclf.com

Briefly describe the role of the partnering organization in developing the Neighborhood Plan:

NJCC was contracted to serve as the lead planning consultant for this Neighborhood Plan. Beginning in Winter 2020 and continuing into Spring 2021, NJCC worked collaboratively with HFHGN to design and conduct community engagement meetings and activities to gather information for this plan. NJCC also led the collection and analysis of secondary data, development of the Plan's strategies, and the writing of Plan content.

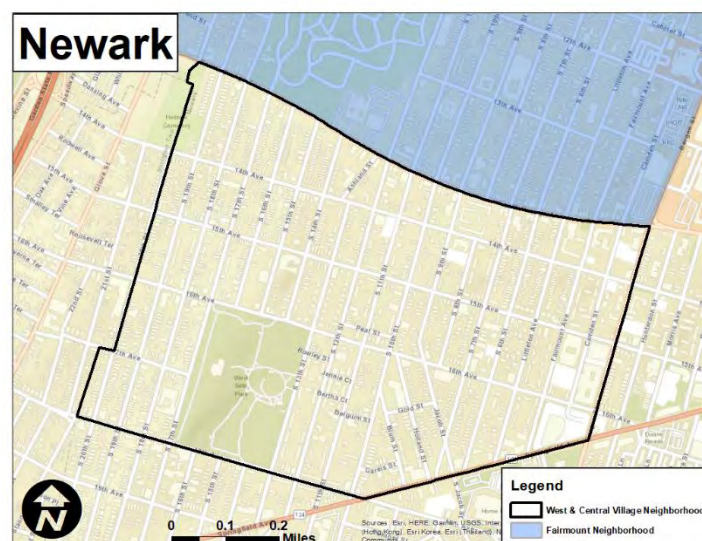
Neighborhood Description and Statement of Need

A. Neighborhood Description

Newark's West & Central Village is a resilient community that's located in the West and Central Wards in Newark, NJ. The West & Central Village neighborhood is bounded by: Bergen Street to the east; 18th Avenue/Springfield Avenue to the south; S. 20th Street to the west; and S. Orange Avenue to the north. Immediately north of West & Central Village, sharing South Orange Avenue as a border, is the Fairmount Neighborhood which has historically taken part in the Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit (NRTC) program and which is administered by the Urban League of Essex County. **Map 1** shows the neighborhood in relation to Newark's total land area. **Map 2** provides a zoomed-in view of the streets that fall within West & Central Village.

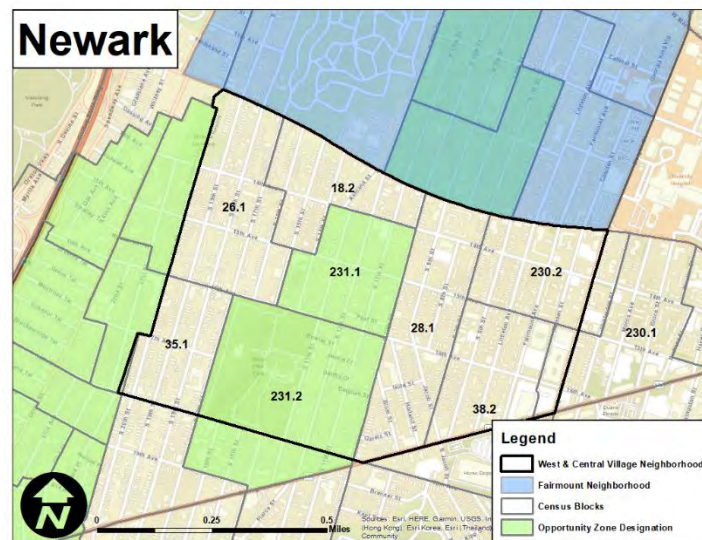


Map 1: Location of neighborhood in relation to surrounding area.



Map 2: Neighborhood Map of West & Central Village.

The neighborhood contains the entirety of Census Tracts 26 and 28, and portions of Census Tracts 18, 35, 38, 230 and 231. **Map 3** shows the Census Block Groups that make up the neighborhood; the federal designation of Census Tract 231 as an “Opportunity Zone” is also featured in this map.



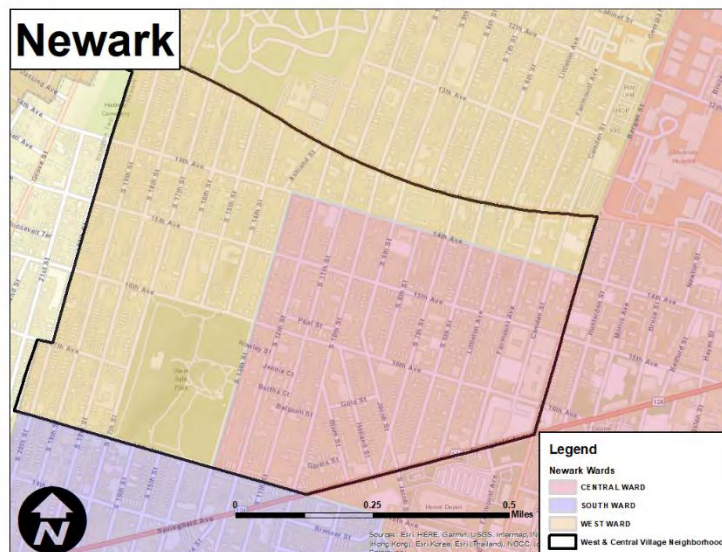
Map 3: Neighborhood Census Blocks and Opportunity Zone Designation.

With an estimated population of 10,074 (American Community Survey (ACS) 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates), the neighborhood is home to 3.6% of the City’s residents. A breakdown of high-level statistics by Census Block Group can be found in **Table 1**, below.

	18.2	26.1	28.1	35.1	38.2	230.2	231.1	231.2	Total
Total Population	840	1,564	1,898	1,414	924	1,038	1,309	1,087	10,074
Unemp. (%)	14.8%	9.6%	19.9%	9.8%	29.4%	21.2%	6.5%	13.9%	15.3%
% Population (25+) with HS Degree or Higher	80.1%	85.8%	81.2%	79.6%	71.3%	78.6%	82.2%	76.9%	80.0%
Median Household Income	N/A	\$22,950	\$41,705	\$35,000	\$45,919	\$32,589	\$40,591	\$50,343	\$39,038
% Below Poverty	34.7%	43.9%	35.8%	27.9%	22.5%	41.5%	25.9%	16.6%	32.0%
Housing Units	411	809	684	572	354	406	519	483	4,238
Owner (%)	15.3%	7.8%	31.3%	41.7%	55.0%	18.4%	29.9%	20.7%	26.4%
Renter (%)	84.7%	92.3%	68.7%	58.3%	45.0%	81.6%	70.1%	79.3%	73.6%
Vacancy (%)	25.1%	23.5%	18.3%	13.6%	23.5%	26.4%	13.7%	18.8%	20.0%

Neighborhood Context & History

West & Central Village is a subset of the West Side neighborhood, a locally recognized neighborhood that straddles the West and Central Wards. **Map 4** displays the neighborhood in context with the City's ward boundaries.



Map 4: West & Central Village with Newark Ward Boundaries.

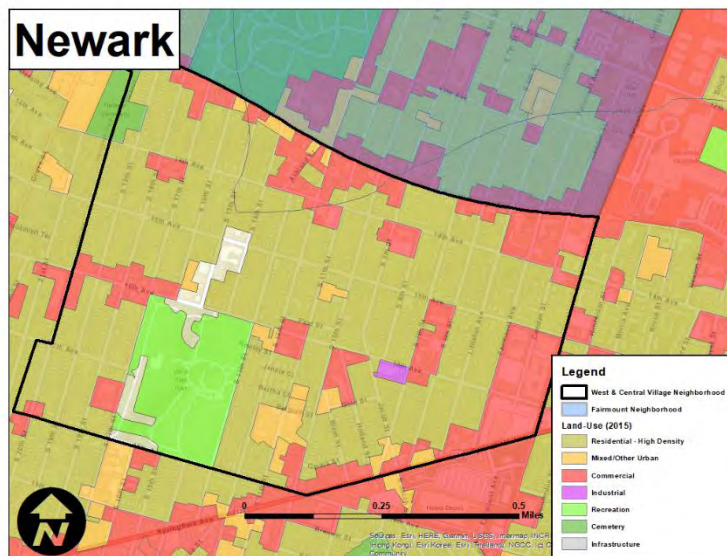
West Side shares its northern and eastern boundaries, South Orange Avenue and Bergen Street, respectively, with West & Central Village, but the West Side neighborhood expands further south and west. This neighborhood is mostly residential and home to Woodland Cemetery (located beyond West & Central Village's southern boundary), West Side Park, and several schools.

Located immediately northeast of West & Central Village - sharing South Orange Avenue as a border – is the Fairmount neighborhood of Newark. Fairmount is a mixed-use neighborhood bounded by Bergen and First Streets to the east, Interstate 280 to the north, the Garden State Parkway to the west, in addition to its shared boundary with West & Central Village in the South. The Urban League of Essex County has conducted extensive planning efforts in the Fairmount neighborhood and the revitalization efforts in that neighborhood have been supported by the Wells Fargo Regional Foundation and the NRTC program.

Historically speaking, West & Central Village has long been a residential neighborhood supported by commercial corridors at its edges. For generations, the neighborhood was the home of a population largely of Jewish and Irish heritage. Black residents began moving to the neighborhood as part of the Great Migration from the South starting in the early decades of the 20th Century. The post-WWII GI Bill and the construction of interstate highways precipitated the suburbanization of upwardly mobile White residents to areas north and west of Newark where their Black neighbors, due to institutional racism, could not follow. The neighborhood came to serve as the backdrop of Civil Rights activities in Newark during this period in the middle of the 20th Century. The Springfield Avenue commercial corridor was the epicenter of much of the unrest related to the 1967 Newark Riots/Rebellion. The aftermath – abandoned homes and lots, the destruction/closure of neighborhood businesses, and the physical and psychological trauma associated with the Riots/Rebellion – is still impacting the West & Central Village more than 50 years later.

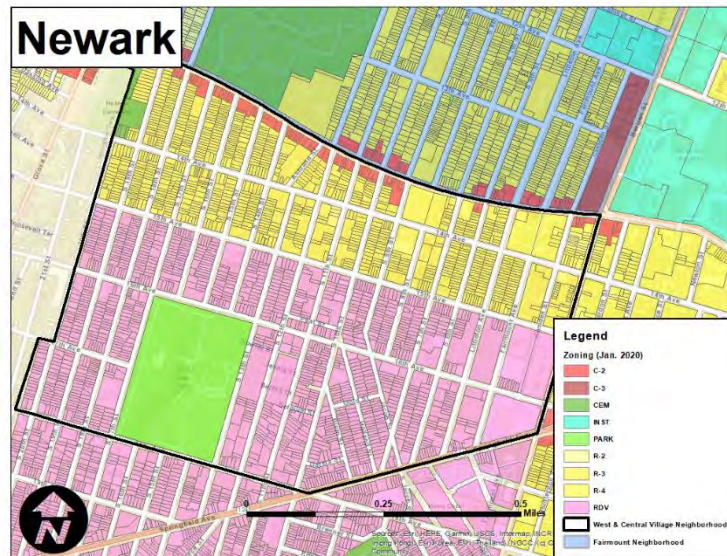
Land-Use & Zoning

West & Central Village has consistency when it comes to land-uses. Commercial and mixed-use properties are almost exclusively clustered along the edges of the neighborhood – Springfield Avenue, South Orange Avenue, and Bergen Street – with pockets of commercial and mixed-use activity on 16th Avenue, S. 11th Street, and near S. 7th Street. West Side Park is the largest recreational land-use in the neighborhood and represents an area roughly the size of four city blocks in the southwestern portion of the neighborhood. **Map 5** provides a visual depiction of the land-use in West & Central Village as of 2015.



Map 5: Neighborhood Land-Use (2015 Land-Use/Land-Cover).

In terms of neighborhood zoning, properties in West & Central Village typically fall into one of three categories. The Kent/Brenner/Springfield Redevelopment Plan (discussed at length in Section 5.e of this Plan) covers the entirety of the neighborhood south and west of 15th Avenue. North of 15th Avenue, the area is zoned for R-3 and R-4 housing which is apparent by the presence of 1-3 family homes, townhouses, and low-rise (2-3 story) multifamily housing. Along South Orange Avenue, properties are zoned C-2 “community commercial” which is consistent with the street’s status as the heart of the neighborhood’s commercial activity. **Map 6** provides a look at the neighborhood’s zoning as of January 2020.



Map 6: Neighborhood Zoning (January 2020).

Businesses

The business community in West & Central Village is spread across the neighborhood's commercial corridors with large concentrations located along Springfield Avenue, South Orange Avenue, and Bergen Street. Additionally, a hub of business activity can be found on 16th Avenue between West Side Park and S. 20th Street. As of November 2020, there were at least 175 businesses located within West & Central Village.

Businesses in the neighborhood run the gamut in terms of offerings, including: small grocers, banks and a credit union, furniture and clothing retail shops, professional offices (lawyers, financial advisors, doctors, etc.), and numerous restaurants. There are also a significant number of used car lots, repair shops, and other ancillary automobile uses in the neighborhood – most of these are along Springfield Avenue, Bergen Street, and the northwestern-most portion of South Orange Avenue.

The largest 'businesses' located within the neighborhood are New Community Corporation's Extended Care facility – employing more than 250 people – and NCC Health Care Inc. – employing between 100 – 249 people – which are located at 266 South Orange Avenue. Approximately 132 of the 175 businesses (75.4%) in the neighborhood employ less than 10 people; 109 businesses (62.3% of total) employ less than 5 people.

Parks & Recreation

The neighborhood's only significant park is West Side Park, located between South 17th Street and South 13th Street and bound by 16th Avenue and 18th Avenue. This 31.36 acre site is owned and maintained by Essex County as one of the 30 parks in the Essex County Parks System. Acquired in 1895 as a "neighborhood park", the park's design was created by the renowned Olmsted Brothers landscape architecture firm. In 1987, the County constructed the West Side Park Community Center on the elevated western portion of the park allowing for an indoor gymnasium to be available for the neighborhood year-round. United Community Corporation, a local non-profit, operates the Community Center and provides after-school and summer camp programs on site. The park also includes a children's playground, 4 tennis courts, 4 outdoor basketball courts, a baseball diamond with artificial turf, an artificial turf football field with a 400-meter running track, and a bandstand. A new splash-pad for small

children has been installed within the past several years; an older splash pad in the park is in need of significant repair or removal.

B. Conditions and Need for Revitalization

For the purposes of this analysis of the West & Central Village neighborhood, Census Blocks 18.2, 26.1, 28.1, 35.1, 38.2, 230.1, 231.1, and 231.2 were used. All data are from the 2015-2019 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates unless otherwise noted.

People

West & Central Village is home to 10,074 people. Between 2000 and 2010, the neighborhood grew by 7.1% to a peak of 10,822 residents. These gains have been wiped away in recent years, as the population declined 6.9% between 2010 and 2019. Block Group 230.2 located in the northeast corner of the neighborhood experienced the most population loss, decreasing 40.5% between 2010 and 2019. Block Group 35.1 in the southwestern corner of the neighborhood, grew 21.8% between 2010 and 2019. Block Group 28.1 is home to approximately 18.8% of West & Central Village residents.

Approximately 84.3% of residents identify as African American or Black, a 4.8% decrease since 2000. Block Group 230.2 experienced the greatest decrease, losing 40.6% of its African American or Black residents, while the African American or Black population grew 21.1% in Block Group 28.1. Residents identifying as Asian, despite being a small portion of the overall population at 1.3%, grew from 10 to 130 residents between 2000 and 2019, with a majority of this growth occurring in Block Groups 35.1 and 231.2.

Table 2: Demographic Information (Percent of Population)			
	2000	2010	2015-2019 Estimate
Total Population	10,104	10,822	10,074
African American/Black	88.3%	83.2%	84.3%
Asian	0.1%	0.1%	1.3%
Non-Hispanic White	1.1%	1.4%	0.6%
Hispanic (All Races)	9.3%	13.5%	10.8%
Other Minority	0.2%	0.9%	2.7%
Two or More Races	1.1%	0.9%	0.4%

Source: U.S. Census 2000, U.S. Census 2010, and American Community Survey 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates

Table 3: Non-Hispanic Population Change (by Demographic Group)						
	2000	2010	Change 2000 to 2010	2015-2019 Estimate	Change 2010 to 2015-19	Change 2000 to 2015-19
Total Population	10,104	10,822	+7.1%	10,074	-6.9%	-0.3%
African American/Black	8,918	9,005	+1.0%	8,487	-5.8%	-4.8%
Asian	10	12	+20.0%	130	+983.3%	+1,200.0%
Non-Hispanic White	109	156	+43.1%	57	-63.5%	-47.7%
Other Minority	23	95	+313.0%	276	+190.5%	+1100.0%
Two or More Races	107	92	-14.0%	41	-55.4%	-61.7%

Source: U.S. Census 2000, U.S. Census 2010, and American Community Survey 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates

The Hispanic/Latino population in West & Central Village comprises approximately 10.8% of the total population. Block groups 231.1 and 231.2 experienced the most growth in the Hispanic/Latino population, increasing from 127 to 265 residents (108.7%) and 85 to 133 residents (56.5%), respectively. Block Group 230.2 saw the largest decrease, from 262 residents to 19, a loss of 92.7%. Despite losing 25.9% of its Hispanic/Latino population between 2010 and 2019, Block Group 26.1 still has the largest Hispanic and Latino population at 274 residents.

Table 4: Hispanic Population						
	2000	2010	Change 2000 to 2010	2015-2019 Estimate	Change 2010 to 2015-19	Change 2000 to 2015-19
Hispanic	937	1,462	+56.0	1,083	-25.9%	+15.6%
Non-Hispanic	9,167	9,360	+2.1%	8,991	-3.9%	-1.9%

Source: U.S. Census 2000, U.S. Census 2010, and American Community Survey 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates

Approximately 2,171 residents, 21.6% of the neighborhood's population, are foreign born. ACS data reveals a West African diaspora living throughout the neighborhood; the diaspora is made up of more than 600 individuals from Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone. The neighborhood also has a sizeable Jamaican population clustered in Census Tract 28.

Based on 2015-2019 ACS estimates, 345 residents, approximately 3.7% of the population age 5 and older, speak English "not well" or "not at all." 74.8% of these residents report speaking Spanish as their preferred language. Block Group 231.1 has the largest non-English speaking population, with 85 residents.

The neighborhood has a large population of children, with 29.0% of residents under the age of 18. The population above the age of 60 comprises 14.8% of the neighborhood. The median age in the neighborhood is 32.2 years old.

Of the 2,306 households in West & Central Village, 38.9% (898) are led by single parents. There are 650 households headed by single mothers (28.8% of the total households), while 248 households (10.8%) are headed by single fathers. Approximately 69.6% of children under 18 in the neighborhood live with single parents.

Income, Jobs, and Education

The median household income for West & Central Village is \$39,038, compared to \$61,510 in Essex County and \$82,545 in the State of New Jersey as a whole. Overall, the median household income in West & Central Village increased by 24.8% between 2014 and 2019. Block Group 231.1 experienced an increase of 60.7%, from \$31,328 to \$50,343, during this period, while Block Groups 35.1 and 230.2 experienced relatively little change, increasing 1.5% and 2.2%, respectively.

The poverty rate in West & Central Village is 32.0% overall. While household income is relatively low in the neighborhood, **Table 5** illustrates that households are slightly better off financially compared to neighborhood data from the 2010-2014 ACS.

Table 5: Number of Households in each Household Income Bracket (Cumulative)							
	Total Households	% Below \$25,000	% Below \$50,000	% Below \$75,000	% Below 100,000	% Below \$150,000	% \$150,000+
2010-14	3,364	40.8%	71.4%	86.8%	92.6%	98.7%	1.3%
2015-19	3,390	37.2%	63.0%	81.0%	91.3%	97.2%	2.8%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2010-2014 & 2015-2019)

The unemployment rate for the neighborhood in 2019 before the COVID-19 pandemic was 15.3%. Overall, the neighborhood's unemployment rate was nearly twice the unemployment rate for Essex County at 8.1%, and nearly three times the State of New Jersey, at 5.5%. Of West & Central Village residents 16 years and older, 4,019, or 84.7% are active in the workforce; only 61.2% of residents 16 years or older in the City of Newark are active in the workforce.

Table 6: Work Status by Age Group							
	Total	Worked full-time, year-round	Percent	Worked less than full-time, year-round	Percent	Did not work in the past 12 months	Percent
16 to 24 years	1,232	178	14.45%	379	30.76%	675	54.79%
25 to 54 years	3,732	1,696	45.44%	1,125	30.14%	911	24.41%
Over 55	1,709	354	20.71%	328	19.19%	1,027	60.09%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2015-2019)

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data from 2018, neighborhood residents work in a variety of industry sectors. Among the industries where the highest number of neighborhood residents work are Health Care and Social Assistance (843); Transportation and Warehousing (530); Retail Trade (480); and Administration & Support, Waste Management, and Remediation (462). Together, these industries employ 53.1% of the employed residents in West & Central Village. Since 2013, there has been a net increase of 198 residents who work. Industry sectors with the largest growth among neighborhood residents include Transportation and Warehousing (+201 workers); Accommodation and Food Service (+35 workers); and Manufacturing (+33 workers). Sectors where fewer residents work include Public Administration (-59 workers); Educational Services (-58 workers); and Information (-41 workers). Industry sectors where residents no longer work are generally higher paying, stable places of employment while sectors that have grown to employ more neighborhood residents are more volatile and typically pay lower wages.

In terms of jobs within the neighborhood, there are 1,358 workers employed within the bounds of West & Central Village. Approximately 87.2% of those workers have jobs in one of four industries: Retail Trade (412); Educational Services (386); Health Care and Social Assistance (226); and Accommodation and Food Services (161). West & Central Village has experienced a net loss (-47 jobs) in the number of workers in the neighborhood since 2013. Sectors where jobs were lost include Accommodation and Food Services (-174 jobs) and Health Care and Social Assistance (-63 jobs). Several industry sectors have gained employees since 2013 – Retail Trade (+122 jobs); Construction (+67 jobs); and Educational Services (+41 jobs).

Since West & Central Village connects to the larger region via transit, a 5-mile radius more reasonably estimates the jobs available to neighborhood residents. Approximately 317,790 workers have jobs within

a 5-mile radius of West & Central Village. Predictably, the largest industry sectors include Transportation and Warehousing, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Educational Services; however, growing sectors such as: Information, Finance and Insurance, and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services employ a significant number of people in close proximity to the neighborhood. The majority of these jobs are in Downtown Newark, the areas surrounding Newark Liberty International Airport and the Port, and in small pockets concentrated along retail/industry corridors in nearby East Orange, Elizabeth, Harrison, Irvington, and Kearny. All of these areas are easily accessible to neighborhood residents via the 7 NJ Transit bus routes (at 54 unique bus stops) that run through the neighborhood; however, the sectors that have experienced growth typically require some form of higher education or specialized training that many residents lack.

An important point of analysis concerning residents in West & Central Village involves their earnings. Approximately 27.2% of employed residents earn \$15,000 per year or less, 43.2% earn between \$15,000 and \$45,000 annually, and 29.6% earn more than \$45,000 per year. Earnings for West & Central Village residents are compared to other geographies in **Table 7**. Strategies that promote residents having the skills and/or access to higher paying jobs are needed to shift this paradigm.

Table 7: Employed Resident Earnings			
	Less than \$15,000	\$15,000 - \$45,000	More than \$45,000
West & Central Village	27.2%	43.2%	29.6%
City of Newark	25.3%	41.0%	33.7%
Essex County	21.3%	30.4%	48.3%
State of New Jersey	20.5%	26.5%	53.1%

Source: LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (OnTheMap) 2018

Approximately 80.0% of West & Central Village residents age 25 and over have a high school diploma or equivalent and 13.1% have at least a bachelor's degree. Overall, educational attainment is lower than Essex County, where 86.1% have at least a high school diploma or equivalent, and 35.5% have a bachelor's degree or higher.

The 2015-2019 ACS estimates that 10.2%, or 68, of the 666 students age 16-19 have dropped out of high school.

Housing

There are 4,238 housing units in West & Central Village neighborhood with 1,218 units (28.7% of the neighborhood's total) in single-family homes, 948 units (22.4% of the neighborhood's total) in 2-family houses, and 2,065 units (48.7% of the neighborhood's total) in multi-family buildings. Approximately 26.4% of occupied housing units are owner occupied. Block Group 38.2 has the highest owner occupancy rate at 55.0%, while Block Group 26.1 has the lowest, at 7.8%.

In West & Central Village, 73.6% of occupied units are renter occupied and 20.0%, or 848 units, are vacant. Four Block Groups in the neighborhood have a vacancy rate higher than 23.0%.

Approximately 28.7% of housing units in the neighborhood were built prior to 1940. Since 2010, 110 units (3.2%) have been constructed, with nearly all of them being built in Block Group 26.1. Block Group 35.1 has the newest housing stock, with 70.6% of units built after 2000, while 35.2% of the total units in the neighborhood were built after 2000.

As of 2019, 1,084 residents in Census Tracts 26, 28, and 231 lived in housing that received some form of rental subsidy, representing 18.5% of residents in those tracts. Of the residents living in subsidized housing, 54.6% lived in housing subsidized by Housing Choice Vouchers, commonly referred to as “Section 8”, and 45.5% lived in public housing. Overall, there are 625 subsidized units in these Census Tracts. Census Tract 26 has the highest number of households receiving vouchers at 12.0%. Census Tract 231 has the highest number of households in public housing (137, or 16.3%), while Census Tract 28 has no public housing.

According to the 2015-2019 ACS, 56.9% of owner-occupied households and 59.0% of renter-occupied households are cost-burdened, spending more than 30% of their income on housing. Additionally, 31.3% of owner-occupied households and 34.5% of renter-occupied households are severely cost-burdened, spending 50% or more of their income on housing. Data from the 2010-2014 ACS, presented in **Table 8**, reveals that the percent of renters that are cost-burdened has decreased slightly, while the percent that are severely cost-burdened has increased slightly. For owner-occupants, the percent that are cost-burdened has remained the same, while the severely cost-burdened decreased.

Table 8: Housing Cost Burden for Renters and Homeowners				
	Renters		Homeowners	
	30% or More	50% or More	30% or More	50% or More
2010-14	60.9%	34.1%	56.9%	36.0%
2015-19	59.0%	34.5%	56.9%	31.3%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2010-2014 & 2015-2019)

Since the 2007 housing crisis, more than half of Class 2 residential (1-4 family) property sales within West & Central Village have been to investor owners, including 53.6% of sales between 2007 and 2014, and 57.1% of sales since 2015. From a 2010 low average sale price of \$102,408.91 to \$198,001.01 for an average sale in 2019, sale prices have gone up 93.3% in a decade but have still not reached pre-housing crisis levels. More recent pre-pandemic residential property sales prices have averaged between \$150,000 and \$200,000, as evidenced by the data in **Table 9**, and home prices in West & Central Village continue to approach pre-housing crisis levels.

Table 9: Class 2 Residential Property Sales (2007-2019)					
	Total Residential Sales	Arms-Length Transactions	Owner-Occupant Purchases	Investor Owner Purchases	Average Sale Price
2007	185	121	74	47	\$267,042.85
2008	190	94	69	25	\$229,215.88
2009	181	97	53	44	\$171,690.24
2010	176	110	49	61	\$102,408.91
2011	134	94	45	49	\$125,757.02
2012	107	79	23	56	\$115,224.95
2013	118	91	34	57	\$137,500.30
2014	120	76	30	46	\$134,165.50
2015	148	100	39	61	\$137,275.70
2016	181	107	36	71	\$159,385.80
2017	233	150	67	83	\$148,736.92
2018	240	156	77	79	\$170,480.28

2019	252	156	68	88	\$198,001.01
Total	2,265	1,431	664	767	\$164,909.80

Source: New Jersey SR1A Property Sales Data (2007-2018)

Community Health

According to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) in 2020, West & Central Village is considered a Medically Underserved Area, a designation given to communities with “too few primary care providers, high infant mortality, high poverty, and/or high elderly population.” Additionally, the neighborhood has a high lead exposure risk due to the age of the housing stock. Census Tracts 26 and 28 have a risk value of 8 out of 10, while Census Tract 231 has a risk value of 7 out of 10¹.

According to 2015-2019 ACS estimates, 13.6% of residents do not have health insurance, 57.1% have public health coverage, and 35.3% have private coverage.

As of 2018, a higher percentage of West & Central Village adults have asthma, diabetes, and high blood pressure when compared to the State of New Jersey. One of the major risk factors for chronic disease is a person’s weight. In 2018, approximately 70.0% of adults in West & Central Village reported being Overweight, having a Body Mass Index (BMI) higher than 24.9, and 37.1% of adults reported being Obese, a BMI of 30 or higher. These figures are both higher than the percentage of Overweight and Obese residents in the State of New Jersey.²

Table 10: Health Conditions for Adults (2018)		
	West & Central Village (%)	State of New Jersey (%)
Asthma	13.1%	8.4%
Diabetes	11.4%	10.8%
High Cholesterol	25.1%	35.5%
High Blood Pressure	35.4%	33.0%
Overweight (BMI > 24.9)	70.0%	62.3%
Obese (BMI > 30)	37.1%	25.6%

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 2018

According to the CDC’s Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey in 2018, 21.6% of adults reported their self-assessed health status as Fair or Poor, 13.4% of adults reported 14 or more days of poor physical health, and 17.4% of residents reported 14 or more days of poor mental health in the past 30 days.

In terms of lifestyle, in 2017 37.2% of adults reported being physically inactive in the past 30 days and 22.4% of adults reported eating less than one serving of fruit or vegetables per day.

C. Evidence of Neighborhood Distress

The Newark, NJ HUD Metro FMR Area establishes the area median income for a four-person household at \$106,000. The 80% of median income threshold is \$78,500. In West & Central Village, 2,745 households, or 81.0%, make less than \$75,000 per year. Additionally, the 50% of median income threshold is \$53,000.

¹ This ranking system was first developed by the Washington State Department of Health which took into consideration the age of housing and poverty as primary risk factors.

² Data in this section comes from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and reflects the Census Tracts that are fully in the neighborhood, including 26, 28, and 231.

2,137 households in the neighborhood make less than \$50,000, approximately 63.0% of all households in West & Central Village.

D. Photographs of Neighborhood Conditions





E. Description of Other Plans

A number of plans have been created by various parties to address different aspects of the West & Central Village neighborhood:

The **City of Newark Master Plan**, completed in 2012, identified a range of goals for the West Side neighborhood. Specific strategies for West & Central Village, as part of the West Side neighborhood, included revitalizing Springfield Avenue through mixed-use development and capitalizing on West Side Park as a neighborhood asset. General goals for the West Side neighborhood include:

- Creating housing choices for residents of all income levels
- Ensuring adequate and safe open spaces and recreation areas
- Ensuring safety on neighborhood streets
- Creating walkable, pedestrian-friendly streets that are home to commercial and retail uses while retaining a distinctive residential feel
- Improving overall neighborhood circulation and connectivity
- Stabilizing smaller neighborhood convenience commercial nodes
- Increasing the sense of community and neighborhood pride
- Enhancing the availability of local goods and services while increasing local employment opportunities by encouraging local hiring practices

Over the past decade, the City has worked to address new neighborhood housing, adequate and safe open spaces and recreation areas, and improving overall neighborhood circulation and activity. Several of the other goals for the West & Central Village remain unfulfilled.

The City of Newark is currently undertaking a new Master Planning process expected to be complete in late 2021.

The **West Ward Model Neighborhood Initiative Redevelopment Plan** was prepared by Phillips Preiss Grygiel LLC and adopted in 2016. The rehabilitation and infill residential area is bounded by South Orange Avenue in the north, Ashland Street and South 13th Street in the east, 16th Avenue in the South, and 20th Street in the west. The designated West Ward Model Neighborhood Initiative (MNI) redevelopment area includes 113 parcels within six blocks in the neighborhood, primarily along South Orange Avenue, on 17th Street between 14th Avenue and South Orange Avenue, and on 16th Street between 14th Avenue and 16th Avenue.

This plan proposed focusing on key redevelopment sites, including the two New Jersey Schools Development Authority (SDA) properties, the former Pabst Brewery site, and city-owned and vacant properties in the neighborhood. To improve neighborhood safety, the plan recommends implementing crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) principles, combatting illegal dumping, and providing supports, services, and recreational opportunities for residents. All of these strategies remain relevant today and are included in this Plan's strategies. The redevelopment plan recommended the creation of the West Ward Special Improvement District (SID), encouraging a diversity of businesses, supporting anchor institutions, and leveraging regional amenities as economic development strategies. Additionally, to improve streets and circulation, this plan recommended the incorporation of "complete streets" principles, create safe walking routes to schools and parks, promote bicycle usage, and targeted improvements on 14th Avenue between South 20th Street to Jones Street.

The **Kent/Brenner/Springfield Redevelopment Plan** adopted by the Newark Municipal Council in 2009 covers the portion of the West & Central Village neighborhood bordered by 15th Avenue to the north, Bergen Street to the east, Springfield Avenue and 18th Street to the south, and South 20th Street to the west. The overarching goal of this plan was to “...reestablish Springfield Avenue as a thriving mixed-use corridor surrounded by a stable residential neighborhood”. The strategies in this plan focus on two development patterns, the commercial/neighborhood center and the residential/mixed-use infill areas, and include accommodating proposed Bus Rapid Transit along Springfield Avenue, supporting regional commercial along Springfield Avenue and smaller neighborhood commercial nodes, supporting affordable housing choices for residents of all income levels, maintaining public and semi-public green spaces including West Side Park, and creating new green spaces by reusing city-owned vacant lots. While significant implementation of this redevelopment plan has been realized along the Springfield Avenue corridor, the affordable housing choices, improved neighborhood commercial nodes, and creating green spaces in city-owned vacant lots have not. These strategies remain important pieces of this Plan.

The **West Side Park: Three Phase Redevelopment Plan** was prepared in 2000 by a Graduate Planning Studio at the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University with the participation of the West Side Park Conservancy/Friends of West Side Park and the NEC. This plan envisioned a “renewed, safer, cleaner park area with appropriate facilities and equipment suitable for all members of the community.” The subsequent plan charted three-phases of redevelopment. The first phase included short-term recommendations, like the creation of a playground, improving park safety through physical investments and community policing programs, maintenance and repairs, and beautification efforts such as a mural. The second phase recommended mid-range projects like rehabilitating athletic fields, adding amenities, ongoing repairs and maintenance, and youth programming. The long-range projects described in phase three include the renovation of the baseball field, installation of flood lights, and other landscaping and aesthetic improvements to the park – most of which have been accomplished.

The most recent neighborhood plan, the **West & Central Village Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy**, was prepared by Urban Partners for Newark Habitat in 2018 with the support of the Wells Fargo Regional Foundation (WFRF). It focused on 6 revitalization areas: Neighborhood Building, Community Safety, Jobs/Economic Opportunity, Housing, Youth/Education, and Community Health. There was significant community engagement and a comprehensive/representative resident survey and significant data analysis. Strategies proposed in the WFRF plan are consistent with, and many are carried forward to, this Plan.

In 2015, the Community Planning Action Program of the American Planning Association, New Jersey Chapter (APA-NJ) was invited by the Tri-City Peoples Corporation to participate in the **West Side Park Neighborhood Planning Initiative**. The resulting plan covers the area bounded by South Orange Avenue in the north, Bergen Street in the east, Springfield Avenue in the south, and South 20th Street in the west and includes several strategies to address issues identified in the neighborhood. These include: improving social connections through continued community organizing, improved community-police relationships, services and programming for at risk youth, and foreclosure prevention; physical investment in the form of strategic redevelopment near West Side Park, 16th Avenue, and Springfield Avenue, reuse of vacant lots, and improved maintenance in West Side Park; economic investment on Springfield Avenue; as well as supporting resident health by improving access to medical care and preventative information. The social service, community-police relations, community organizing, and resident health goals of the West Side Park Neighborhood Planning Initiative remain relevant today and are part of this Plan.

The **University Hospital Community Health Needs Assessment**, prepared in 2014 by Kathy Opromollo, Executive Director of Ambulatory Care Services, identified several health disparities for residents in the greater Newark community, including high rates of chronic and preventable illnesses, high risk behaviors, premature death and infant mortality, and other social determinants of health present for City residents. The resulting strategies address the need for increased access to healthcare services and preventative care and address high rates of heart disease and substance abuse in the City of Newark. While University Hospital continues to make strides in this area, more remains to be done. Community Health remains a focus area in this Plan.

The **Fairmount Neighborhood Strategic Plan** was prepared in 2011 for the neighborhood directly to the north of West & Central Village by the Urban League of Essex County. The Fairmount neighborhood shares South Orange Avenue as a border with West & Central Village. The five goals described in this plan include reducing crime and improving public safety, strengthening the community, neighborhood, and local families, expanding economic development and employment opportunities, enhancing education and job training, and improving land use and quality of life. These strategies are compatible with those proposed in this Plan and support coordinated and compatible reinvestment in the West Ward.

Neighborhood Assets & Involvement

A. Neighborhood Assets

a. Community Assets

Medical

University Hospital	205 South Orange Avenue, Newark, NJ 07103
New Community Extended Care	266 South Orange Avenue, Newark, NJ 07103

Transportation

NJ Transit Bus #1	16 th Avenue
NJ Transit Bus #5	S. 10 th Street
NJ Transit Bus #25	Springfield Avenue
NJ Transit Bus #96	S. 18 th /S. 19 th Street & 14 th Avenue
NJ Transit Bus #250	Springfield Avenue
NJ Transit Bus #361	18 th Avenue & Springfield Avenue
NJ Transit Bus #375	Springfield Avenue

Educational

South 17th Street Elementary	619 S 17th St
Fourteenth Avenue Elementary School	186 14th Ave, Newark, NJ 07103
Harriet Tubman Elementary School	504 S 10th St, Newark, NJ 07103
Marion P. Thomas Charter School	370 S 7th St, Newark, NJ 07103
Bard High School Early College Newark	321 Bergen St, Newark, NJ 07103
People's Preparatory Charter School	321 Bergen St, Newark, NJ 07103
Camden Street Elementary School	281 Camden St, Newark, NJ 07103
Uncommon Schools North Star Academy	557 15th Ave, Newark, NJ 07103
KIPP Rise Academy	21 Ashland St, Newark, NJ 07103
New Community Career & Technical Institute	274 South Orange Avenue, Newark, NJ 07103

Parks/Recreation

West Side Park	South 13th Street and 18th Avenue
South 11th Street Park	South 11th Street
Harriet Tubman School Garden	524-534 S 10th St, Newark, NJ 07103

Community

Essex County West Side Park Community Center	600 S 17th St
New Community Harmony House	278 S Orange Ave # 282, Newark, NJ 07103
United Community Corporation	332 S 8th St, Newark, NJ 07103

Fire/Police Stations

Engine 11 & Ladder 11	345 S 9th St, Newark, NJ 07103
Newark Police-Internal Affairs	247 16th Ave, Newark, NJ 07103

Retail/Commercial Corridor

South Orange Avenue	Between Bergen Street & S. 12 th Street
Springfield Avenue	Between Bergen Street & 18 th Avenue
16 th Avenue	Between S. 17 th Street & S. 19 th Street

b. Regional Assets

Amphitheater

West Side Park	South 13th Street and 18th Avenue
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Performance Space

West Side Park Amphitheater	South 13th Street and 18th Avenue
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Theater

CityPlex 12 Newark	360-394 Springfield Ave, Newark, NJ 07103
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Medical

University Hospital	205 S Orange Ave
New Community Extended Care	266 South Orange Avenue, Newark, NJ 07103

c. Municipal Revitalization Priorities

Since 2003, the Essex County Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs has made a series of capital improvements to West Side Park. The projects included resurfacing the football field, track, basketball and tennis courts; updating equipment and amenities; improvements in the locker rooms and Community Center; adding 40 new trees; and adding a new spray park and climbing facility. Additional investment in West Side Park is needed as residents would like to see improvements to the landscaping, the amphitheater, and programming.

In 2005, the City of Newark designated the entire city as an “Area in Need of Rehabilitation”. This designation allows the municipality to utilize its powers (e.g. tax abatements on property improvements, flexibility in conveying properties) to encourage the renovation and reconstruction of sub-standard structures.

The 2009, **Kent, Brenner, Springfield Redevelopment Plan** (discussed in detail in Section 5) was created to spur redevelopment of a significant portion of West & Central Village. Its implementation has resulted in higher density housing, commercial redevelopment along Springfield Avenue, and streetscape improvements throughout the area.

Introduced by Mayor Ras Baraka in 2013, Newark’s **Model Neighborhood Initiative** (MNI) program aims to coordinate the efforts and resources of Newark’s governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, residents, and other stakeholders in order to revitalize two of Newark’s most distressed neighborhoods. A portion of the West & Central Village Study Area is one of two neighborhoods targeted for the MNI program. A 2016 **Redevelopment Plan** (discussed in detail in Section 5) resulted in targeted redevelopment of more than 30 properties at the northern end of the neighborhood along South Orange Avenue, S. 17th Street, and S. 16th Street. The major activities still planned for the area include:

- Acquisition, clearance and assembly of suitable parcels for the construction of residential, commercial and civic uses.
- Rehabilitation of selected residential and commercial properties.
- Utility and infrastructure upgrades necessary to support the Redevelopment Plan.

Additionally, the City launched the West Ward Special Improvement District (SID) in 2016 to spearhead the revitalization of several corridors in the West Ward. South Orange Avenue from Dover Street to Bergen Street is one of four corridors within the SID and requires thoughtful intervention by the City, community-based agencies, business community, and residents to overcome current challenges. According to residents, the SID has not become fully engaged in West & Central Village as of 2020 – most of their efforts have revolved around the portion of South Orange Avenue north and west of the Garden State Parkway in the Vailsburg section of Newark.

The State of New Jersey designated Census Tract 231 (surrounding West Side Park) as an Opportunity Zone. The entirety of South Orange Avenue, 14th Avenue, 15th Avenue, 16th Avenue, 18th Avenue, Bergen Street, and Springfield Avenue that fall within the West & Central Village Neighborhood are also part of the State of New Jersey's Urban Enterprise Zone (UEZ) program allowing businesses to charge a lower sales tax rate to customers who shop there. Additionally, most of the neighborhood is eligible for state and federal incentive programs such as: Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), New Market Tax Credits (NMTC), NJ Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency's (HMFA) down-payment assistance program (DPA), and incentives available through the New Jersey Redevelopment Authority (NJRA).

d. Recent Investment

In February 2019, Greater Newark Habitat for Humanity opened the Community Hub facility at 298 South Orange Avenue. The Hub serves as a gathering space and resource center for neighborhood residents. Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Hub continues serving neighborhood residents with programs and activities revolving around community health, safety, youth empowerment, employment, and food-security. The facility also serves as the home of community-accessible computers and printers as well as an Identification Restoration program which helps people regain lost or destroyed identification documents.

In 2018, Camden Street Elementary School (281 Camden Street) received a \$570,210 renovation, and North Star Academy West Side Park Elementary School (698-700 S. 16th Street), located just outside of the neighborhood's boundary, invested more than \$300,000 in renovations to its facility.

Between 2016-2018, at least 4 large apartment buildings were sold within the neighborhood. Properties on 16th Avenue, S. 16th Street, S. 17th Street, and S. 18th Street changed hands and sold for between \$240,000 and \$800,000. Improvements were made to each residential property.

B. Neighborhood Involvement

a. Community Support & Engagement

Community Engagement	Date	Objective
Steering Committee Meeting	3/2/21	Intro to Neighborhood Plan, Development of Engagement Calendar

Community Meeting	3/9/21	Intro to Neighborhood Plan, Wells Fargo Plan Strategies Review, Community Building Discussion
Community Meeting	3/24/21	Safety & Community Health Discussion
Community Meeting	4/7/21	Youth Development & Housing Discussion
Steering Committee Meeting	4/13/21	Plan Progress, Recent Investment, Municipal and Partner Priorities
Steering Committee Meeting	5/4/21	Draft Plan Strategies, Continuing Engagement, Attracting NRTC Investment
Community Meeting	5/5/21	Jobs & Economic Opportunity Discussion
Community Meeting	5/19/21	Draft Plan Strategies & Implementation Priorities

Proposed Vision, Strategies, Activities & Outcomes

A. Vision Statement

Newark's West & Central Village is a resilient community that is home to more than 10,000 residents who aspire to transform their neighborhood into a community of choice through:

Neighborhood Building: Create a sense of community pride and inter-connectedness among residents whereby they build unity by advocating together for their needs, priorities, and resources;

Community Safety: Enhance safety for all residents by creating alliances between residents, the police department, and community stakeholders;

Jobs & Economic Opportunity: Empower residents by helping them access resources necessary for acquiring and retaining employment;

Housing: Provide more affordable housing options, repair existing homes, and work with city officials to address vacant and blighted properties;

Youth & Education: Empower youth to achieve their potential by promoting use of educational and vocational resources in the neighborhood;

Community Health: Create mental and physical health awareness, promote preventative care, and address behavioral issues in school-aged children.

B. Strategies

Focus Area #1: Neighborhood Building

The West & Central Village Neighborhood Planning process offered a venue for community residents to collaborate on actionable strategies that will help shape the future. Serving as the lead agency responsible for the implementation of these strategies, HFHGN's goal is to incubate a community based decision-making body that will guide and oversee the work.

Resident leaders can and should be at the table to make decisions for the future of their neighborhood and their City. Building the capacity of neighborhood residents, further establishing the West & Central Village Hub as a community center, and effectively communicating within the neighborhood and to external stakeholders are all part of this. The strategies described in this section will position the neighborhood as a model neighborhood.

Strategy 1.1: Support the Framework for Community-Based Leadership

Residents should have a lead role in directing the future of their neighborhood. Residents expressed a desire to take ideas and put them into action – they just want some help getting started.

Leadership starts right in West & Central Village. Looking to other successful neighborhood revitalization efforts locally and nationally for guidance, HFHGN will cultivate strong resident leadership by establishing a resident Advisory Council and supporting the development of block clubs to guide the implementation of this neighborhood plan. Further, residents will have access to leadership training and be supported on a programmatic level by a Community Organizer.

To achieve this HFHGN will employ of the following tactics and activities:

- Hire a community organizer and develop a community organizing program
- Establish a resident Advisory Council to support neighborhood revitalization
- Develop, support, and maintain a network of block associations and block leaders
- Foster resident leadership through formal and informal training and development opportunities

Strategy 1.2: Further Establish the West & Central Village Hub as a Community Center

Since opening to the public in early 2019, the West & Central Village Hub has served as an important community asset in the neighborhood. A key goal of the WFRF-sponsored plan, the Hub has served as a literal hub of activity for neighborhood residents and expands the community space that residents crave. The Hub offers computers/printers for use by residents, regular programming geared at different age groups and demographics, as well as 1-1 support for neighborhood families who need help with filling out forms, social service referrals, or translation services. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Hub has continued to serve the neighborhood's needs as the location of a weekly food distribution program.

Moving forward, HFHGN and the community envision the West & Central Village Hub as a vibrant community space accessible to neighborhood residents and community groups. At several community meetings, residents discussed the types of programming they want to see at the Hub, which at a minimum include homeownership classes, job skills training, arts programming, and activities for seniors and youth. HFHGN and their partners will develop this programming and offer a robust calendar of events and activities at the Hub.

- Operate and maintain the West & Central Village Hub as a neighborhood community center
- Host consistent neighborhood programming that appeals to youth, adults, and seniors
- Provide access to computers, printers, and the internet for neighborhood residents
- Assist neighborhood residents with applications and other social service referrals

Strategy 1.3: Launch a Neighborhood Marketing & Communication Strategy

Many residents believe that the West & Central Village neighborhood is a good place to live and are frustrated that outside perception is focused only on negative aspects such as crime and poverty. The idea of branding the neighborhood seeks to combat and turn around this negative perception. The neighborhood brand and the signage, print material, and clear vision that comes with it will focus on the many positive aspects to spur renewed interest and attention on West & Central Village. This effort will also establish a community calendar that will serve as a trusted source and communicate programs, activities, and events to the community.

Over the next decade, HFHGN will employ these and other activities to reach that end:

- Promote the neighborhood through attractive, engaging signage, print materials, etc.
- Initiate a community calendar (digital and physical) that lists upcoming events, programs, and activities
- Maintain a connection between and among neighborhood residents and stakeholders through digital, print, and other forms of communication

Focus Area #2: Community Safety

The top priority of neighborhood residents and stakeholders is to make West & Central Village a safe place to live, work, and play. In order to address community safety, strategies and activities meant to strengthen resident-police relationships and promote a more open dialogue about neighborhood concerns are

needed. Beyond strengthening relationships with law enforcement, neighborhood residents want root causes of criminal activity to be addressed and they would like to see investments in crime prevention. The strategies and activities proposed in this Plan will help give residents peace of mind knowing that a multi-pronged approach to improving public safety is being implemented.

Strategy 2.1: Build a Closer Relationship between the Police and Neighborhood Residents

Residents and police officers agree that the most effective and sustainable approaches to public safety involve a close relationship between police and residents. In the past, foot patrols, bicycle patrols, mobile substations, and other community policing programs were operational but have been discontinued due to lack of funding. The West & Central Village is covered by both the 1st and 4th Precincts – the 4th Precinct is located within the boundary of the neighborhood immediately adjacent to West Side Park. The physical presence of officers and their relative proximity to neighborhood residents is just one piece of the puzzle.

Currently, 60.7% of resident survey respondents felt that Public Safety was “Poor” or “Very Poor”. NPD officers noted that programs meant to build relationships between officers and the community have made a noticeable impact and resulted in what residents felt was a more responsive NPD. When prior iterations of those programs ended, residents noticed increased blight and crime as well as slower response times to calls. Residents want NPD officers equipped and empowered to engage in positive interactions with at-risk youth and other community members dealing with homelessness, addiction, or mental illness. That kind of community-focused approach will allow residents and officers to work together to target interventions on the “hot spots” that negatively impact residents’ quality of life.

Improving public safety will take a concerted effort by HFHGN, the NPD, and neighborhood residents implementing activities such as:

- Hosting regular meetings between NPD officials and neighborhood residents to address neighborhood “hot spots” and other quality of life concerns
- Promote communication and relationship-building between municipal officials (NPD, City officials, etc.) and residents through activities and programs
- Advocate for community policing and other targeted strategies to address neighborhood concerns

Strategy 2.2: Increasing Public Safety and Reducing Opportunities for Crime

Addressing the root causes of criminal behavior will require implementing the full spectrum of strategies in this plan; the quality of housing, availability of employment, youth programming, and resident health all factor into why individuals commit crimes. This strategy aims to deter criminal activity by raising awareness of “hot spots”, placing barriers in the way of individuals wanting to commit crimes, and implementing policies and practices that empower residents to prevent crime in their own neighborhood. These efforts, while coordinated by HFHGN, will be owned by residents of West & Central Village and implemented in partnership with the NPD.

The activities proposed in this Plan directly address the most common nuisance behaviors and issues outlined by neighborhood residents in community meetings and in surveys that create more safety problems and opportunities for crime. Promoting neighborhood cleanliness and reducing blight (e.g. addressing unkempt lots, vacant and abandoned properties, etc.) means individuals have fewer places where they can hide illicit activity. Proactively addressing concerns around pedestrian and vehicular safety by restriping crosswalks and parking spaces can reduce accidents and improve intra- and inter-

neighborhood travel. Lastly, connecting residents with public-, private-, and non-profit sector resources to address property maintenance, tenant-landlord issues, and public works needs empowers them to work individually or collectively to improve their neighborhood.

This plan proposes the following activities to prevent criminal behavior and address problem properties:

- Improve public safety by implementing Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) tactics such as installing and maintaining cameras and better lighting throughout the neighborhood
- Host regular block clean-ups throughout the neighborhood
- Empower neighborhood residents to connect with municipal and legal resources to address negligent landlords, nuisance conditions, and other illegal activity
- Work with city officials to restripe street lines and pedestrian crosswalks and install additional speed humps where feasible
- Work with the City to monitor and address vacant and abandoned buildings and lots that are magnets for dumping and illegal activities

Focus Area #3: Jobs & Economic Opportunity

Jobs & Economic Opportunity is both a focus area of this plan and a statement of purpose for each resident of the neighborhood. The strategies outlined in this section focus primarily on offering career services and workforce training, while working with the business community to improve the look, feel, and function of neighborhood storefronts and commercial spaces. Reducing common barriers to those seeking employment, helping residents understand personal and household finance, and supporting existing and new businesses will take strong partnerships and a clear plan of action. HFHGN will work with partners to support the residents and businesses of the West & Central Village as they seek jobs and economic opportunity.

Strategy 3.1: Offer a Variety of Career Supports and Personal Finance Services

The West & Central Village neighborhood is home to many residents who want to find employment that pays them a living wage. According to the 2015-2019 ACS, the West & Central Village has a total of 4,019 residents age 16 and over. Approximately 84.7% of those individuals are active in the workforce and 15.3%, or nearly 1 in every 6 residents, is unemployed, compared to 11.3% for the City of Newark and 8.1% for Essex County. One barrier to employment revolves around education, job training, and skill development. Just 80.0% of residents over the age of 25 have a high school degree – compared to 86.1% for Essex County residents and 89.8% for New Jersey.

Similarly, many West & Central Village residents lack the understanding and skills necessary to manage the personal and household finances that they do have. More than 70% of neighborhood residents earn less than \$45,000 annually. Throughout the planning process, residents discussed feeling “squeezed” every month and having to make difficult choices about which household priorities could be addressed and which ones had to wait.

Residents want direct support to help them increase their wages and better manage their finances. Supports are available locally through the Financial Opportunity Center and New Community Training Institute located in or in close proximity to the West & Central Village. HFHGN’s existing partnership with Franciscan Charities to help individuals acquire important identification documents is also a piece of the puzzle that should be expanded. Lastly, residents spoke at-length about the costs associated with starting

a job (e.g. transportation, uniforms, meals, etc.) before they receive their first paycheck. HFHGN is committed to creating a “Start-Up Stipend” program to help residents reduce the stress and anxiety associated with beginning a new job.

The activities outlined below will help HFHGN and their partners address career and personal finance challenges expressed by neighborhood residents:

- Partner with the Financial Opportunity Center (FOC) to offer employment, career counseling, financial coaching/education, and other financial security supports to residents
- Assist unemployed residents with resume writing, applications, and other referrals to gain employment
- Maintain and expand the ID restoration program for neighborhood residents to obtain important documentation needed to (re)enter the workforce
- Connect individuals seeking job training/skill development for in-demand jobs in construction, health care, and auto-centric businesses to quality programs in those areas
- Connect with youth (16-24) and returning citizens to provide them with exposure to careers, educational pathways, employment opportunities, and soft skills training to (re)join the workforce
- Create a “Start-Up Stipend” program that bridges initial work expenses (transportation, workplace clothing, lunch, etc.) before the first paycheck is received

Strategy 3.2: Support Vibrant and Thriving Business Corridors

The West & Central Village is home to several business corridors that primarily serve the needs of residents and the areas immediately surrounding the neighborhood. South Orange Avenue, Springfield Avenue, and a portion of 16th Avenue have a bevy of storefronts (i.e. childcare centers, corner stores/bodegas, banks, furniture and clothing retailers, etc.). Residents expressed support for neighborhood businesses – pointing to favorites and long-time proprietors who are active in the community – but want to see more variety in the types of shops and restaurants available as well as improvements to the overall look and feel of the storefronts.

Residents want to see the commercial corridors in West & Central Village alive with foot-traffic, occupied storefronts, and features that make people want to spend time there, such as benches, attractive and well-maintained trash cans, street trees, and a wider variety of businesses. Supporting the businesses in West & Central Village involves offering training and financing institutions to help small businesses and entrepreneurs wishing to take the next step. Furthermore, HFHGN wants to build a stronger partnership with Partnership West, Inc. which manages the Special Improvement District (West Ward SID) in the area so that the corridors can benefit from planters, benches, and other enhanced services.

These activities, when implemented, will support more vibrant business corridors and help neighborhood businesses thrive.

- Connect neighborhood businesses along South Orange Avenue to the West Ward SID (Partnership West, Inc.) and improve lighting, seating, waste receptacles, and general aesthetics along South Orange Avenue and the neighborhood’s other commercial corridors
- Incentivize the repair/reoccupation of neighborhood commercial spaces by businesses that meet the needs and wishes of neighborhood residents (e.g., fitness center, electronics store, a local post-office branch, another local fresh food grocer).

- Support small businesses and entrepreneurs with technical assistance training, incentives, and other supports to expand in West & Central Village
- Incentivize neighborhood bodegas and corner stores to carry “healthy” products (e.g. fresh produce, cleaning supplies, etc.)

Focus Area #4: Housing

Housing affordability, vacant and abandoned properties, and high property taxes are some of the issues impacting residents. Residents of the West & Central Village who aspire to own their own homes face a series of additional challenges. Renters are also struggling with home buying and financial literacy, building conditions and tenant/landlord issues. A comprehensive housing strategy for low-wealth individuals is needed in the West & Central Village. HFHGN, as an affordable housing developer, is committed to addressing these issues. Together with their partners, HFHGN will address the supply, quality, and affordability of housing in the West & Central Village.

Strategy 4.1: New Construction & Property Rehabilitation

For more than 30 years, HFHGN has been working to address the amount and quality of affordable housing in and around Newark. More recently, HFHGN has begun addressing what they and residents view as the next great housing challenge in the neighborhood – providing critical health and safety repairs and weatherization services to the more than 4,000 housing units in the West & Central Village. The challenge over the next 5-10 years will be focusing their own work, while galvanizing additional partners who share this vision, within the West & Central Village.

During the planning process, residents bemoaned the lack of quality housing that is available and affordable to both low-income renters and low-income would-be homeowners. Large, market-rate housing developments have been constructed over the past decade in and around the neighborhood as a byproduct of redevelopment plans that cover most of the neighborhood’s footprint. Residents view these developments as “not for us” since, in most cases, their relative lack of income precludes them from renting or buying any of them. HFHGN’s focus on low-income, first-time homebuyers presents one of the only avenues currently available for current neighborhood renters who want to purchase a home in the West & Central Village.

Working with the City of Newark to acquire, rehabilitate, and sell some of the more than 800 vacant and abandoned properties can help to reduce blight and get residents into homeownership. Further, there is a recognition that home repair programs that focus on life safety, home health, and weatherization will go a long way toward preserving the existing housing stock for the next generation of Newarkers. Lastly, HFHGN knows that they will need to galvanize the support and resources of private and other mission-aligned developers to create affordable and supportive rental housing in the West & Central Village.

These activities will set the neighborhood on a path toward full implementation of a strategy to realize new construction and property rehabilitation:

- Acquire, construct/rehab, and sell new affordable housing in the neighborhood
- Acquire and rehabilitate vacant/abandoned housing by working with the City’s abandoned property laws/processes
- Provide critical life safety, preservation, and weatherization repairs to neighborhood homes
- Support the development of mixed-income rental housing throughout the neighborhood

Strategy 4.2: Homeownership Support & Education

The homeownership rate for West & Central Village is approximately 26.4%. Since 2015, 57.1% of the residential sales in the neighborhood have gone to investor owners. In order to strengthen the neighborhood and help residents build intergenerational wealth, HFHGN is committed to supporting residents whose long-term goals include homeownership.

Homeownership education and counseling must be paired with the types of personal and household finance supports discussed in Strategy 3.1 in order to set residents up for success. Residents who attended community meetings also talked about needing financial support – in the form of down-payment and closing-cost assistance – to help them access homes in neighborhood, which have become increasingly expensive and competitive. HFHGN offers their own home maintenance courses and seminars that they would like to make available more broadly to the community. Partnering with local developers and contractors, HFHGN can simultaneously connect residents with local resources and grow the capacity of these entities whose work is critical to achieving more quality, healthy homes in the neighborhood.

The activities below can be implemented to support residents on the path to homeownership:

- Provide pre-purchase counseling and foreclosure prevention services to neighborhood residents
- Connect residents with down-payment and closing-cost assistance.
- Develop and deliver home maintenance courses and seminars to neighborhood property owners.
- Support local contractors with referrals to training and capacity building support to help them take on more of the home repair work needed.

Strategy 4.3: Housing Advocacy

Advocating for better housing conditions, more affordable for-sale and rental housing, and land-use that complements the neighborhood's existing building stock were the three most salient points discussed during the community meeting focused on housing. For HFHGN, these housing issues are at the forefront of their work as an affordable housing developer. For residents, these issues have impacted their lives and how they are addressed will impact their future.

As of the 2015-2019 ACS, nearly 60.0% of renters and approximately 56.9% of homeowners spend more than 30% of their income on housing that is often in poor condition; 34.5% of renters and 31.3% of homeowners are spending more than 50% of their income on housing, while around them the neighborhood is changing. Residents spoke about new developments being large and out-of-scale with the existing neighborhood building stock. These market-rate, multi-family housing developments seem to go beyond the intent of the neighborhood's R-2 and R-4 zoning and do not feel like they comport with the goals of the redevelopment plans governing large swaths of the neighborhood.

Residents want to advocate for better conditions, and they want to preserve the character of the neighborhood. To help achieve that, HFHGN and their partners will work with residents to advocate for more affordable, low-income housing, new development at an appropriate scale, as well as policies, ordinances, and programs that ensure long-term affordability for neighborhood homeowners and renters. HFHGN knows that a significant aspect of empowering residents means directing them to the education and connections they need to make their case to decision-makers. HFHGN will enlist their local, statewide, and national partners to support them and the residents of West & Central Village in their quest for more affordable, well-maintained, and complementary housing.

- Empower residents to advocate for policies that address affordability for homeowners (e.g. homestead benefit program, property tax freeze for seniors, etc.)
- Support residents with referrals and education on tenant-landlord issues, foreclosure prevention, and eviction mitigation
- Educate residents about planning, zoning, and other land-use issues to equip them to advocate for a mixed-income neighborhood with 2-4 family homes as the heart of the West & Central Village

Focus Area #5: Youth & Education

West & Central Village is home to a large population of youth under 18 years of age (29.0% of residents). Neighborhood residents desire more opportunities for these young people to be nurtured, empowered, educated, and trained to be successful citizens that give back to the community. In order to do that, HFHGN and its partners will work to support youth programming, employment, and activities while strengthening learning and educational outcomes more broadly.

Strategy 5.1: Support Youth Programming, Activities, and Employment

Throughout the planning process, residents spoke about the need to better engage youth (under 18) and young adults (18-24). The current programming available to them through their schools, local places of worship, and non-profit organizations is well developed and engaging; however, there are more young people than slots available and some families are not even aware of the existing programs. Residents want the youth and young adults in West & Central Village to have more opportunities and are willing to work with HFHGN and their partners to make that happen.

Examples of programming and potential partners that can be supported to expand their capacity can be found locally. West Side High School, located just outside of the West & Central Village Neighborhood, has developed a “Lights On” program designed to keep youth off the streets by offering free programming every Friday during the school year and three times per week during the summer. The Student Conservation Association (SCA) provides high school students with yearlong internships that culminate in paid summer jobs in the fields of conservation and environmental stewardship. United Community Corporation (UCC) is contracted by Essex County to run the community center in West Side Park; their after school and summer programming includes recreation, the arts, and other educational activities.

Residents spoke about wanting these (and other) programs to scale-up and accept more neighborhood residents. They are also hoping to secure more slots for neighborhood youth in the City’s highly successful summer Youth Employment Program. HFHGN can also be a key partner in this work by utilizing the Hub as the location of after school and summer enrichment programs.

The activities below will help HFHGN and the residents of the West & Central Village better engage neighborhood youth:

- Utilize space at the Hub for youth after school and summer programming and activities
- Partner with local organizations, businesses, and the City to provide employment opportunities as well as job and skill training programs for neighborhood youth ages 16-24
- Work with the Student Conservation Association’s Newark Community Crew Program to perform routine maintenance of street trees and maintain property sight lines for stop signs
- Engage partner organizations in developing and administering arts, culture, and recreational programming and showcase events for youth

Strategy 5.2: Strengthen Learning Outcomes and Education

West & Central Village parents are concerned that the education their children are receiving in school is not always enough to position them for success in their careers and their lives. While parents recognize that they need to be actively engaged in their children's education, a combination of factors – having to work multiple jobs, their own lack of knowledge/understanding of school subjects, and the cost (time and resources) needed to be successful – make the task daunting.

Educational attainment for neighborhood youth and young adults is comparatively low, with 10.2% of the neighborhood youth ages 16-19 having already dropped out of school compared to 5.6% in the City of Newark. Of residents over the age of 25, just 80.0% have a high school diploma or equivalent and just 13.1% have at least a bachelor's degree. While the neighborhood has a slightly higher level of educational attainment than the City of Newark as a whole (75% with at least a high school diploma and 15.3% with at least a bachelor's degree), residents lag significantly behind Essex County (86.1% and 35.5%, respectively) and the State of New Jersey (89.8% and 39.7%, respectively) in both categories.

To address these challenges, HFHGN and residents must work together to connect the dots and reduce/eliminate barriers to children completing school and succeeding in and out of the classroom. Residents said that they wanted structured programs that had low barriers to entry; dedicated programming in partnership with The Leaguers and local schools can begin to address this need. Further, HFHGN will leverage its relationships with area colleges and universities to specifically recruit neighborhood youth to enrichment programs and as matriculated students. Lastly, HFHGN and its partners will work to create programs and spaces for tutoring and homework help for youth in need of extra support.

The activities below will begin to strengthen learning outcomes and education for neighborhood youth:

- Work with the Leaguers to create a Parent Academy at neighborhood schools and pre-schools
- Support the establishment and capacity building of Parent-Teacher organizations in partnership with local schools
- Work with local schools, social service providers, and parents to provide supports and services to students at-risk of dropping out of school
- Work with local colleges/universities to directly recruit and support neighborhood youth who want to pursue higher education
- Partner with neighborhood schools and local colleges/universities to establish homework help/tutoring programs

Focus Area #6: Community Health

This plan envisions addressing community health systemically through improvements to the built-environment and addressing access to quality food and care. One of the major assets of the West & Central Village is the presence of University Hospital located just outside of the neighborhood's boundary where Bergen Street and South Orange Avenue meet. While University Hospital has and will continue to serve the medical and mental health needs of neighborhood residents, this Plan presents a more comprehensive approach to addressing overall community health. HFHGN and its partners will work to ensure that the general health of neighborhood residents improves over the next 10 years.

Strategy 6.1: Improve the Health of Neighborhood Residents

The task of improving individual and community health will take the proverbial “Village”. Health is more than just the doctors we see, the exercise we get, and the food we eat. Health is about the physical, social, and mental well-being each of us experience. When parts of our lives are stressful or when something you need (e.g. food, shelter, income) is in limited supply, it impacts your health. Residents of the West & Central Village are acutely aware of these limitations and are committed to working with partners to address them.

When asked about their individual health, residents spoke about ailments – temporary and chronic – that have been left unaddressed. According to 2020 data from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HSRA), the West & Central Village is considered a Medically Underserved Area - a designation given to communities with “too few primary care providers, high infant mortality, high poverty, and/or high elderly population.” The CDC’s Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey noted that 21.6% of West & Central Village residents reported their health status as ‘Fair’ or ‘Poor’. Higher than the average for New Jersey residents as a whole of 16.7%. Neighborhood residents also raised concern about the issue of mental healthcare. Again, CDC’s Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey shows that 17.4% of West & Central Village residents reported 14 or more days of poor mental health in the previous 30 days, higher than the national and state averages of 12.7% and 11.3%, respectively.

Practically, the resources to improve the health of neighborhood residents exist – they just need to be prioritized and brought into focus. University Hospital can serve as a critical partner in the work of improving individual and community health by holding and promoting workshops, programs, and activities on all facets of healthy living. Supplementary care is still needed and HFHGN and their partners will need to connect residents with primary care, maternal health, and mental health/counseling resources throughout the region. Long-term, the goal is to attract more providers to the neighborhood. More education and outreach is needed to help residents sign-up for health insurance. Lastly, improving health also means improving the built environment. Improvements to lighting and sidewalks and the installation and maintenance of street trees not only improve the safety of the neighborhood but also encourage more people to get outside and be active.

These activities will contribute to the implementation of this strategy:

- Hold and promote workshops, programs, and activities that share information about health living, active lifestyles, and healthy food
- Connect neighborhood residents with primary care, maternal health, and mental health/counseling resources and attract these services to the neighborhood
- Educate and provide outreach to residents to encourage them to sign-up for health insurance during annual enrollment periods
- Improve access to safe, well-lit walking paths throughout the neighborhood
- Plant and maintain neighborhood street trees to develop tree canopies on residential streets

Strategy 6.2: Promote Access to Healthy Food

The residents of the West & Central Village expressed a strong desire to become more food-secure in the coming decade. With low incomes and rising costs for housing and everyday goods, residents typically look to bodegas/corner stores to purchase food. The closure of a Pathmark grocery store on the northwest

corner of South Orange Avenue and Bergen Street in 2015 significantly reduced the presence of fresh food available for purchase. While many neighborhood residents shop at a ShopRite location just outside of the neighborhood on Springfield Avenue, this location is often busy and fresh fruit and vegetables are picked-over. The COVID-19 pandemic further reduced residents' ability to access fresh and healthy food as grocery stores and supply chains were operating at reduced capacity. HFHGN has served as a conduit for neighborhood residents who were food-insecure and who needed access to fresh food.

Fresh food is needed to improve residents' health. Data from the CDC reveals that as of 2018, 25.1% of adults had at some time been diagnosed with high cholesterol and in 2017 approximately 35.4% of adults had at some time been diagnosed with High Blood Pressure. In 2018, approximately 70.0% of adults in West & Central Village reported being Overweight, having a Body Mass Index (BMI) higher than 24.9, and 37.1% of adults reported being Obese, a BMI of 30 or higher. Coupled with regular exercise, many of these health issues can be addressed by having a healthy diet of fresh food.

To remedy these issues, residents proposed a series of activities to further promote access to healthy food. As a temporary/semi-permanent solution to the myriad vacant lots in the West & Central Village, residents want to be able to develop and maintain a network of community gardens – similar to what exists in other neighborhoods in Newark. Moreover, residents want HFHGN and other neighborhood institutions to continue organizing and facilitating food distribution for at-risk and food-insecure individuals and families. While the pandemic may be subsiding, the long-term impacts of COVID-19 on income, employment, and health are not yet known. Lastly, residents recognize that bodegas/corner stores are not currently stocking the types of fresh food and healthy cleaning products that will improve their well-being – they are ready for that to change.

Below, the activities proposed by residents will promote access to healthy food:

- Create and maintain a network of community gardens throughout the neighborhood
- Continue organizing and facilitating food distribution for at-risk and food-insecure neighborhood residents
- Work to incentivize neighborhood bodegas and corner stores to carry “healthy” products (e.g. fresh produce, cleaning supplies, etc.)

C. NRTC Investment as a Catalyst

The West & Central Village is beginning to experience new investment as the City of Newark and the region attract new businesses and development. However, the historic disinvestment in the neighborhood leaves the building stock, social programs, and ultimately the residents further behind than most other neighborhoods in the City. The Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit (NRTC) program offers the neighborhood a vehicle to kick-start targeted, equitable investment in the neighborhood.

HFHGN, as the lead organization, has a proven track record of building homes, communities, and hope. Its development capacity, the relationships it has built during the planning process and over its tenure working in the neighborhood, and the presence of a dedicated community Hub position it as a key driver of neighborhood revitalization. The work HFHGN has done, spurred on by the Regional Foundation's funding, will serve as a springboard for further neighborhood revitalization work and allow NRTC funding to help scale-up the initiatives that are in progress. Furthermore, HFHGN's long-standing corporate and philanthropic partnerships will leverage NRTC dollars and allow for the plan's strategies and activities to be implemented.

The partner organizations who have committed to supporting HFHGN and the West & Central Village bring their own expertise and capacity to this work. New Jersey Community Capital (NJCC) and its subsidiary Community Asset Preservation Corporation (CAPC) can leverage their 35+ years of community development history and knowledgeable staff to move into implementation projects that fall under various focus areas. The Student Conservation Association (SCA) has been a trusted partner for several years and stands to leverage their expertise to engage youth and address resident concerns about property conditions, street trees, and the long-term maintenance of West Side Park – the neighborhood’s most prominent asset. New Community Career & Technology Institute also has a storied history in the neighborhood. Their expertise in job training and skill and career development will help neighborhood residents increase their annual income, position residents in jobs that can turn into careers, and support individuals who need to re-tool and be re-trained for the 21st century economy.

The neighborhood’s assets are areas of strength that this Plan seeks to build off. Among the assets, West Side Park is both the most prominent feature of the neighborhood and an asset that has already benefitted from considerable investment by Essex County. Businesses and partner organizations (i.e. NPD’s 4th Precinct and UCC) are located immediately adjacent to the Park and there are plans for a large Newark Housing Authority property on the southeast side of the Park to be redeveloped. Neighborhood schools (there are 10 spread throughout the neighborhood) will be used as anchors around which targeted interventions will take place. While not directly in the neighborhood, University Hospital and West Side High School are anchor institutions to which hundreds of neighborhood residents regularly travel. Their programming and their successes are the West & Central Village’s programs and successes. Lastly, the seven NJ Transit bus lines that run through the neighborhood connect neighborhood residents to a world of opportunity.

Participatory Planning Process

The Planning Process

The development of this West & Central Village Neighborhood Plan was fortunate to be able to build on a Wells Fargo Regional Foundation (WFRF) funded neighborhood planning process that occurred between September 2017 and March 2018. During the WFRF process, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newark (HFHGN) engaged more than 400 households through public meetings and visioning workshops, focus group meetings, stakeholder interviews, and on social media platforms. A resident survey was completed; nearly 350 individuals responded to questions about their satisfaction with the neighborhood, their confidence that the neighborhood would change (and in which direction), and what residents felt needed to be prioritized in terms of neighborhood revitalization. This process resulted in the **West & Central Village Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy** detailed in Section 5 and referenced extensively in this Section.

HFHGN submitted a neighborhood planning grant application to the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) in Spring 2020 in order to update the data and strategies in the WFRF Plan and re-engage neighborhood residents on the subject of neighborhood revitalization. The development of this Plan built on the engagement, data, and strategies from the WFRF process. Recognizing that nearly three years had passed since the WFRF planning process took place, the neighborhood has experienced change that needed to be addressed in this Plan's strategies. Community meetings focused on revisiting strategies developed in 2018 – revising or supplementing where appropriate – and incorporating emerging resident priorities into the Plan's goals, strategies, and activities.

The work of identifying a planning consultant and assembling a team of dedicated resident leaders and community stakeholders to shape the Plan began once HFHGN was awarded the DCA planning grant in September 2020. CHCA selected New Jersey Community Capital's (NJCC) Community Strategies team to serve as the planning consultant for the updated West & Central Village Neighborhood Plan in November 2020. Giancarlo Di Lonardo, Community Strategies Project Manager, served as project manager and was assisted by Haleigh Schmidhamer, Community Strategies Fellow. Their colleagues Diane Sterner, Director of Community Strategies, and Jason Rowe, Senior Project Manager, provided additional input and support throughout the process. In addition to the team from NJCC, the Planning Team consisted of staff from HFHGN (Jeffrey Farrell, Alana Davis, and Danielle Sanchez) as well as Chris Daggett, a HFHGN consultant/advisor. This Planning Team met regularly throughout the planning process to develop meeting agendas, activities, and shape the Plan's content.

Methods of Engagement

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the fact that many neighborhood residents lack reliable access to the internet, the Planning Team developed a hybrid approach to community engagement. HFHGN organizes a food distribution program for neighborhood households experiencing food-insecurity due to the pandemic and regularly interacts with dozens of individuals on a weekly basis. The Planning Team leveraged this weekly gathering to attract residents to engagement sessions accessible both via Zoom and projected on a screen for residents to attend in-person in a safe, socially-distant environment. The Planning Team organized five community forums in this hybrid style which attracted more than 150 community members.

Additionally, a resident survey was administered both online and through HFHGN staff making direct appeals to residents via phone calls and door knocking.

The Steering Committee met three times throughout this planning process to help shape the engagement schedule, identify partnership opportunities and priorities, and leverage their networks to further engage the community. Lastly, a focused meeting was held in May 2021 with partner organizations to discuss specific goals, strategies, and activities that each is committed to implement over the next decade to help make the goals in this plan a reality. This meeting produced key outputs and outcomes, commitments of personnel and resources, and a sense of shared ownership over the trajectory of the neighborhood.

Between these methods of engagement, HFHGN was able to engage at least 350 members of the West & Central Village community.

Resident Satisfaction Survey

The WFRF funded **West & Central Village Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy** saw HFHGN knock on more than 1,200 doors to collect 343 completed resident surveys. The Planning Team utilized many of the same survey questions asked in 2017-18 to be able to compare resident sentiment over time. Approximately 185 complete responses were received from the 2021 survey that also featured open-ended questions where residents could provide written comments on several prompts offered by the Planning Team. While HFHGN did not collect enough survey responses in 2021 to consider the results a representative sample of the neighborhood, there are insights that can be drawn from what was collected.

Survey respondents came from a broad spectrum of tenure in the neighborhood. Approximately 48.1% of respondents have lived in the West & Central Village for less than 10 years (5.5% less than 1 year, 20.2% 1-5 years, and 22.4% 6-10 years). Longer tenured residents were the majority of survey respondents (19.1% 11-20 years, 20.7% 21-30 years, and 12.0% 30+ years). A majority of survey responses came from renters (68.0%) with an additional 20.1% of responses coming from people who live with relatives/friends. This underscores the sentiment residents expressed during community meetings that housing was becoming more expensive and there were significant barriers to finding quality, affordable rental or for-sale housing in the neighborhood. Despite that, 61% of respondents said they would like to continue living in the neighborhood if given a choice.

Steering Committee

HFHGN empaneled a small but well-connected Steering Committee made up of community partners, residents, and other stakeholders to ensure that this new Plan continues to address neighborhood priorities. The Planning Team took care to invite several individuals who served on the Steering Committee for the WFRF plan to ensure continuity. In addition to these individuals, HFHGN identified resident leaders and representatives from emerging partner organizations to join the Committee.

Over the course of the planning process, the Steering Committee met three times (March 2nd, April 13th, and May 4th). During these meetings, the Committee shaped the engagement strategy, identified recent investments and municipal/partner priorities, and helped to refine the Plan's goals, strategies, and activities. The members of the Steering Committee were:

Rodney Brutton
New Community Technical Institute

Kevin Hill
Consultant

Avi Telyas
Makerhoods

Pastor Gerald L. Dickson
Beulah Bible Cathedral Church

Anthony Diaz
Newark Water Coalition

Community Meetings

During the 2017-2018 Wells Fargo-funded planning process, two large public meetings were held (September 2017 and November 2017). The initial session allowed HFHGN to discuss the planning process and perform an initial S.W.O.T. analysis around four topic areas: Housing, Jobs/Economic Development, Youth/Education/Public Health, and Community Safety. The second session offered residents an opportunity to weigh-in on specific strategies and priorities related to each of the topic areas.



The 2021 planning process built on the resident engagement that occurred during the **West & Central Village Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy** development. The Planning Team organized a series of five (5) community meetings to discuss strategies from the original plan, identify changing priorities and new developments in the neighborhood, and discuss how residents wanted to arrive at a revitalized neighborhood. Each community forum was organized around a different topic:

March 9, 2021	Plan Introduction, Wells Fargo Plan Review, & Community Building
March 24, 2021	Safety & Community Health
April 7, 2021	Youth Development & Housing
May 7, 2021	Jobs & Economic Opportunity
May 19, 2021	Draft Plan Strategies & Implementation Priorities

Community meetings were structured in a hybrid format – occurring in-person at the Hub and online via Zoom. This format was a necessary adjustment as numerous West & Central Village households lack reliable access to the internet and public health guidance precluded large indoor gatherings. The Planning Team leveraged HFHGN’s weekly food distribution program to attract residents to an engagement session that was available via Zoom (for those with internet access) and projected on a screen for residents to attend in-person in a safe, socially-distant environment in the parking lot behind the Hub facility. As public health guidance allowed for small gatherings, the in-person, socially-distant meetings moved inside at the Hub while individuals continued to join the meetings via Zoom.



These community meetings regularly attracted 20-30 neighborhood residents and stakeholders in-person and anywhere from 5-15 residents and stakeholders on Zoom.

Focus Groups

The **West & Central Village Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy** conducted a series of focus group or “task force” meetings in October 2017 during the 2017-2018 planning process. These meetings resulted in the development of the six (6) major focus areas that are present in both Plans: Neighborhood Building, Community Safety, Jobs & Economic Opportunity, Housing, Youth & Education, and Community Health.

While the 2021 planning process did not conduct individual focus groups on each of these areas, the Planning Team reviewed the notes compiled by each task force from 2017-2018. The issues that they debated formed the basis of prompting questions during community meetings. Individuals involved in specific task force meetings were engaged during the 2021 planning process and were active participants throughout the development of this Plan.

Partner Meetings

In May 2021, the Planning Team organized a meeting with key neighborhood institutions and representatives from partner organizations. Partner organizations discussed their priorities, current and upcoming initiatives they planned to administer in West & Central Village, and resources they were prepared to commit to the implementation of this Plan. This meeting produced key outputs and outcomes, commitments of personnel and resources, and a sense of shared ownership over the trajectory of the neighborhood. Further, this meeting helped to shape the Plan's short, medium, and long-term priorities as well as identify additional recent investments made in the neighborhood by public-, private-, and non-profit sector partners.

Organizational Capacity and Experience

A. Organizational Capacity

The core vision for the Neighborhood Revitalization effort is strong and empowered residents taking a central leadership role and having the preeminent voice in transforming their community. By ceding the leadership role to residents, while supporting, serving and seeking ways to build capacity, HFHGN ensures the work will be sustainable over time without making the neighborhood dependent on just one nonprofit organization.

HFHGN has a rich and longstanding presence in the West & Central Village and has full confidence in its ability to execute the activities set forth in its Neighborhood Plan. HFHGN's housing development achievements, combined with the progress made under the Regional Foundation Implementation Grant, serve to demonstrate the organization's ability to effectively manage implementation of a comprehensive neighborhood plan.

Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newark is well-positioned in terms of management depth. Each senior management position is supported by talented individuals with institutional history and experience. Mid-level management employees have high levels of responsibility and visibility in the community and often work independently offsite. HFHGN utilizes leading financial management systems and internal controls to manage and maintain its strong fiscal standing.

B. Current Activities

Affordable Housing: HFHGN has built 110 homes in support of affordable housing and provided critical repairs to 80 homes through our Critical Repair and Healthy Homes Initiative throughout Essex, Hudson & Union Counties. Homes are built for low/moderate-income first-time homeowners with Area Median Incomes between 30% and 80%. Partner Families qualify based on three criteria: need for a decent home, willingness to partner, and ability to pay. Additionally, 200 hours of sweat equity must be provided toward the construction of their home.

Critical Repair and Healthy Homes Initiative: HFHGN provides critical repairs for low-to moderate-income homeowners. To date, HFHGN has performed 120 critical repairs to 80 homes throughout Northern New Jersey. Many challenges come with owning a home and deferred maintenance often develops into larger issues. HFHGN tackles issues such as asbestos and mold remediation, roof repair and other safety and health related issues for low-income residents. Since 2016, through the Critical Repair and Healthy Homes Initiative, HFHGN and PSEG have worked in partnership to complete repairs severely affecting the health and safety of low-to moderate-income homeowners. HFHGN assesses and completes structural issues and PSEG provides new HVAC systems, furnaces, and energy efficiency upgrades. This comprehensive approach not only makes for safer and healthier homes for some of the most vulnerable populations, but also helps lower monthly utility costs for these families.

HFHGN is the recipient of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) through the following municipalities: City of East Orange, City of Elizabeth, and City of Jersey City. This funding focuses on critical repairs for low-income homeowners, with Habitat of Greater Newark working as the lead agency.

West & Central Village Community Resource Hub: During the WFRF neighborhood planning process, residents identified six priorities, which in turn, became the pillars of focus for the HFHGN West & Central Village Neighborhood Plan. Safety & Crime, Education & Youth Engagement, Housing, Community Health,

Neighborhood Building, and Jobs & Economic Opportunity comprise the issues that have long plagued residents. A physical space dedicated to providing services in direct correlation to the six priorities was needed. Consequently, in February 2019, Habitat of Greater Newark opened the West & Central Village Community Resource Hub. The Hub, located at the corner of South Orange Avenue and South 6th Street, sits at the heart of the neighborhood.

One service offered at the Hub is the ID Restoration Program. In partnership with Franciscan Charities, HFHGN assists residents in restoring vital documents such as birth certificates, Social Security cards, and state-issued IDs.

The weekly food pantry offers healthy, shelf-stable meals to residents in need. For those unable to leave their home, HFHGN offers a mobile delivery service in collaboration with Newark Community Solutions.

C. Development and Service Delivery Capacity

The 2.9-square mile Study Area in the West and Central Wards is the founding grounds of HFHGN's origin for more than 30 years. In the process of building nearly 50 homes in and around the area, HFHGN has cultivated an active and trusting relationship with the residents beyond just constructing houses. Since 2015, Community Condition Panels have been meeting monthly, empowering residents to voice their concerns for the neighborhood and present ideas on community improvements. HFHGN began to address these concerns through pilot initiatives that helped improve public safety, such as installing smoke detectors in homes and canvassing to report street lighting that needed to be repaired. In addition, HFHGN partnered with community stakeholders to offer child and youth engagement activities such as College Fairs and summer camps, as well as adult career assistance such as resume building workshops.

Even with a strong community structure currently in place and working on issues that emerged from listening to the residents, the challenges in the neighborhood are significant and too complex for any one organization to tackle alone. Seeking the opportunity to build a cross-sector coalition to address the multiple dimensions of community building, HFHGN partnered with numerous organizations sharing this common interest. In the fall of 2016, HFHGN submitted a collaborative proposal to the Wells Fargo Regional Foundation for a Neighborhood Planning Grant. The grant was awarded in spring 2017 and the planning process kicked off soon thereafter. The successful completion of a neighborhood plan led to an Implementation Grant in 2019.

At the heart of HFHGN's neighborhood revitalization effort is resident and stakeholder engagement. Residents of the area coined the name "West & Central Village" for their neighborhood and through the planning process, HFHGN identified the following areas of need: neighborhood building, community safety, jobs/economic development, housing, youth/education, and community health. The need for a community space to connect residents to resources was evident. Subsequently, from its co-op building located on South Orange Avenue and South 6th Street in Newark, Habitat of Greater Newark officially opened the West & Central Village Community Resource Hub to address the neighborhood priorities outlined above. Expanding upon existing relationships with other nonprofits of the area, HFHGN was able to staff the Hub with partners specific to each community need. In response to COVID-19, HFHGN quickly pivoted, partnering with New Community Solutions to expand services offered at the Hub, including a weekly food pantry.

Organization Information

A. Organizational Profile

See Form NP-2 attached

Lead Organization: Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newark

B. Financial Resources

Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newark (HFHGN) has maintained a strong financial position over the course of its thirty-year history. Continually seeking diverse revenue streams has contributed to the organization's ability to meet or exceed its annual revenue projections.

With an operating budget of \$3.3 million, HFHGN benefits from a wealth of funding sources. Sales to homeowners account for 49% of the overall budget, 25% comes from corporate and foundation support, government sources total 19%, individual and faith-based donors account for 4% and miscellaneous sources comprise 3% of the total operating budget.

In 2021, HFHGN will open its first ReStore in Fairfield, New Jersey, which will serve as the retail arm of the organization and yet another avenue for income.

As it stands, HFHGN corporate, foundation and government funding sources include the following:

\$100,000 & Above – Regional Foundation, Victoria Foundation, PSEG Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, City of East Orange, Township of Livingston, J.M. Huber, Habitat for Humanity International

\$20,000 - \$99,000 – Kearny Bank Foundation, Kislak Family Foundation, Panasonic, Bank of America, Prudential Financial

\$5,000-\$19,999 – Brown Brothers Harriman, Grand BK Corp., Morgan Stanley, Wells Fargo Foundation, Enterprise Holdings, Ferring Pharmaceutical, Hyde & Watson, The Home Depot Foundation and Lowe's.

Additionally, HFHGN is a current grantee but has yet to receive funds from the following government sources:

\$100,000 & Above – Department of Housing & Urban Development Veterans Housing Rehabilitation & Modification Program, City of Jersey City Community Development Block Grant, City of Elizabeth Community Development Block Grant and New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Lead Safe Single-Family Home Remediation.

C. Community Involvement

Throughout its long history, HFHGN has worked alongside its Partner Families to redevelop neighborhoods and provide affordable homeownership opportunities to low- and moderate-income residents of Essex, Hudson and Union Counties. To date, 110 homes have been constructed in pursuit of this mission, including several homes in the West and Central Village neighborhood.

Since 2016, through the HFHGN Critical Repair & Healthy Homes Initiative, HFHGN and PSEG have worked in concert to complete repairs severely affecting the health and safety of low -to moderate-income homeowners in Newark and beyond. PSEG Comfort Partners works to address weatherization issues in

the homes of their low-income customers. Unfortunately, more often than not, upon assessing the homes, PSEG notices larger structural issues of greater concern than energy efficiency improvements. HFHGN was tasked with items such as roof repair, mold/asbestos remediation, kitchen repairs, new bathrooms and drainage improvements. Once complete, PSEG is able to provide new HVAC systems, furnaces, energy efficient appliances and insulation. This comprehensive approach not only makes for safer and healthier homes for some of the most vulnerable populations, but also helps lower monthly utility costs for these families.

Although new construction and rehabilitation remain a focus of the organization, HFHGN also understands the importance of resident-driven community development as a means to impact neighborhoods on a broader scale. This is especially true within the West & Central Village. HFHGN began its Neighborhood Revitalization (NR) work in the West & Central Village in 2015. Engaging residents and other organizations became an invaluable tool in HFHGN's NR efforts during this time. In collaboration with partners such as Newark Public Schools, Newark Community Solutions, Kingdom Builders Ministry, Franciscan Charities, United Community Corporation and Newark Police Department, HFHGN formulated the beginnings of what eventually became the framework for its Neighborhood Plan. Accomplishments include monthly community meetings on topics such as public safety, job training, trauma and financial literacy, block cleanups, petitions to install speed humps and other safety measures in the neighborhood and an annual youth summer camp.

In 2017, HFHGN was awarded a prestigious Wells Fargo Regional Foundation (now Regional Foundation LLC of the Philadelphia Foundation) Planning Grant and subsequent Implementation Grant in 2019 and has been working with residents and other nonprofit partners to identify and create pathways to tackle neighborhood issues, including food insecurity, education, housing, safety, health and employment. HFHGN and its community partners determined that a brick-and-mortar location was needed to best serve the community and thus, the West & Central Village Community Resource Hub (the Hub) was established.

Since the opening of the Hub, located on the corner of S. Orange Avenue and S. 6th Street in Newark in 2019, well over 1,000 residents have been assisted through its services. The ID Restoration Program at the Hub, in partnership with Franciscan Charities, has fulfilled over 500 requests for items such as social security cards, birth certificates, and NJ/MVC photo IDs to date.

Addressing food insecurity through community health is one of six priorities of the Hub, established long before the current crisis. HFHGN recognizes that food insecurity has only been exacerbated by COVID-19. The Hub is now also operating as a weekly food pantry, serving upwards of 7,000 meals per month. HFHGN partners with Newark Community Solutions for mobile food pantry distribution. The mobile pantry, with deliveries every Wednesday, delivers meals to seniors and immunocompromised residents who are unable to leave their homes.

FORM NP-2: ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE: HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OF GREATER NEWARK

A. AGENCY INFORMATION

What was the organization's date of incorporation?

May 19, 1986

What was the original purpose for which the organization was formed?

Habitat for Humanity Newark initially only served Essex County, specifically Newark, providing affordable housing through its first-time homeownership program. Although the core mission has remained the same, the footprint and services have expanded since its founding in 1986.

What is the organization's current mission statement?

- *To empower people through faith in action to share dreams across economic and racial barriers.*
- *To provide decent, affordable housing in partnership with low and moderate-income families and together, work to revitalize the City of Newark, NJ and surrounding communities in Essex, Hudson and Union Counties.*
- *To be a well-established, caring community organization with adequate financial resources, effective structure, and staffing.*
- *To help create a visible community of homeowners and volunteers making a positive difference and contribution to their local neighborhoods.*

Is the organization in "Good Standing" with the NJ Department of State?

YES

X

NO

When did the organization file its current N.J. Charitable Registration and Investigation Act Report (CRI-300R)?

Date:

Documents to be submitted as Attachment(s):

- *"Certificate of Good Standing" certificate from State of New Jersey*
- *Copy of current NJ CRI-300R form*

B. BOARD OF DIRECTORS INFORMATION

Board Chairperson:

Carlton Daniels

Date Elected:

Term Expiration Date:

March 2022

Number of Authorized Board Members:

13

Number of Current Board Members:

13

How frequently does the Board meet?

Monthly

Is the Board involved with fundraising activities?

YES

X

NO

If YES, when was the last activity conducted, for what purpose, and how much was raised?

The Board advises on all fundraising campaigns.

Documents to be submitted as Attachment(s):

- *List of current members of the Board of Directors, as of January 1 of this year*

C. PERSONNEL – TOTAL AGENCY

What is the current agency staffing level?

Full Time: 7
Part Time: 0
Volunteers: 0

Provide the following information regarding full-time staff employed by the organization in the past 5 years:

Year	Annual Employee Turnover Percentage	Leadership / Senior Staff Included?	
		YES	NO
2016	20%		X
2017	30%		X
2018	40%	X	
2019	0%		X
2020	0%		X

For any year in which employee turnover percentage exceeded 20%, provide an explanation:

We are a small organization with less than 10 employees at any given time so if loss of two staff members in the same year results in turnover greater than 20%.

When was the Executive Director hired? 2012

Documents to be submitted as Attachment(s):

- *Resume for the Executive Director*
- *Organization Chart*

D. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

What is the organization's fiscal year?

Start Date: July 1
End Date: June 30

When was the organization's current year total budget approved by its Board of Directors?

May 25, 2021

Did the organization incur a deficit at the end of its most recent fiscal year?

YES

NO

X

If YES, what is the amount, and how will the agency reduce/address the deficit?

When was Form 990 most recently completed and submitted to the IRS?

May 15, 2021

When was the organization's most recent annual audit report (audited financial statement) completed?

April 21, 2021

What was the time period covered in the audit report:

July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

Were there any internal control or compliance findings from the organization's most recent annual audit report?

YES

☐

NO

X

Documents to be submitted as Attachment(s):

- *Organization's total budget for the current year, with funding sources listed*
- *Copy of the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting at which the organization's current year total budget was approved*
- *Copy of the three (3) most recent annual audit reports for the organization*
- *Copy of the corrective action plan related to internal control or compliance findings from the organization's most recent annual audit report, if applicable*